

Savage Tire Factory (Aztec Brewing Company)
2201-2399 Main Street
San Diego
San Diego County
California

HAER No. CA-79

HAER
CAL.
37-SANDI,
28-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Engineering Record
Mid-Atlantic Regional Office
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19106

HAER
CAL,
37-SANDE
28-

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

Savage Tire Factory (Aztec Brewing Company)

HAER No. CA-79

Location: 2201 Main Street (Block 78 and 79 and alley)
2301 Main Street (Lots 39 through 48, Block 78)
San Diego Land & Town County Addition
San Diego County, California

UTM: Zone - 11
Easting - 486780 487100 Northing - 3617320 3617050
Quad: Point Loma

Date of Construction: 1911-1920, Altered in 1934.

Architect: Quayle Brothers

Builder: G. W. Bell & Company

Present Owner: Northern Automotive Company
845 E. Missouri Avenue, Suite 400
Phoenix, Arizona 85005

Last Use: Tire business

Present Use: Vacant; to be demolished in 1989

Significance: This industrial complex was one of the earliest and largest in San Diego. It was the production site of the first "puncture-proof" pneumatic automobile tire, an invention of international importance. Modified in 1934, this factory represented an unusual example of conversion to a post-exhibition brewery, one of only three extant in the city, and manufacturer of the local, internationally-awarded ABC (Aztec Brewing Company) beer. Portions of the complex were designed by prominent architects Quayle & Quayle (1911) and Eugene Hoffman (1915), with later modifications by Arlo R. Sedgely, Richard Griesser, and Chester Kirkpatrick (1933-34). Murals of a high artistic value were employed at the site, executed by the internationally-acclaimed artist, Jose Moya del Pino.

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September 1989

Historian: Kenneth D. Rose
September 1987

Savage Tire Factory (Aztec Brewing Company)

The Savage Tire Factory/Aztec Brewing Company Complex, located at 2201-2399 Main Street in San Diego, California has a history as an industrial site that dates back to the early twentieth century. Its early years were ones of continual expansion, and for a long time it was San Diego's largest industrial site. In order to better understand the history of the site, this report will be divided into two sections. The first section will deal with the architects who designed the buildings and the physical description and evolution of the site. The second section will cover the historical background of the people and companies associated with the site, and discuss what is known of the operations and manufacturing processes involved.

The Architects

The three original buildings at 2301 Main Street, site of the original Savage Tire Factory, were the only known factory buildings designed by the locally-prominent Quayle Brothers, and upon completion, represented the largest and best-built structures of their kind in San Diego.

Charles and Edward Quayle were born in Illinois in the 1860's, and were sons of William Quayle, also a renowned architect who had studied in England. During the 1880s and 1890s, William trained his sons in architecture, and they participated in the designs of many structures. Since most structures built by the Quayles were constructed of brick or stone, they became experts in the use of these materials. The young Quayles followed their father to San Diego in 1907 and went into partnership with one another.

Over the next 33 years, the Quayle Brothers designed many San Diego buildings, including theatres, business blocks, apartments, and homes. In 1933, the Quayle Brothers won Honors Awards for exceptional architectural merit for the Elks Club at 402 West Broadway in San Diego. A newspaper article, high-lighting the Quayles stated that Quayle-designed buildings "are milestones in this city's architectural development"(The Evening Tribune, May 24, 1986). Charles and Edward died months apart in 1940.

Around 1932, architect Richard Griesser was commissioned to convert the tire factory into a brewery. He was the son of noted architect and engineer Wilhelm Griesser, who had offices in

St. Louis, New York, Pittsburgh, Denver, and Chicago, and who specialized in the design of breweries and related buildings, Griesser was the architect for the Mission Brewery, a San Diego Mission Revival style brewery which is now listed on the National Register of Historic Places. In 1934, architect and engineer Chester Kirkpatrick was hired to design a new addition when it was determined that production should be doubled.

The Structures

The original factory building, constructed in 1911 and located just east of the trolley/railroad tracks at the north end of the site, is a three-story brick building with a flat roof, stepped parapet and a band of decorative brickwork just above the third floor windows on the north end. Original features of the building included double hung sash windows, a corbeled course just below the flat roof line, and a cylindrical tank placed above the roof in a horizontal orientation. An elevator tower extends above the third floor on the south side of the building.

Another original building, a warehouse, is a one-story brick structure with a metal gable roof, located southeast of the building described above. It originally contained furnaces used in the manufacture of the tires and later, it served as a finishing cellar for the brewery. This building, presently two stories, is now hidden behind various metal additions.

Also in 1911, a no-longer-extant one-story brick "steel furnace" building with a gable roof was constructed south of the factory building. It has been determined that this structure was probably replaced in 1915 during an expansion of the tire factory, and further expanded in 1934 to house the ice making facility for the brewery.

During this 1915 expansion, a one-story addition was constructed along the north elevation of the original factory building. This addition served as a connection to the tire warehouse to the north, and later became the "Rathskellar", site of the fine murals painted by internationally-acclaimed artist Jose Moya del Pino. In addition, a three-story brick building east of the factory and adjacent to Main Street was also constructed, apparently for more corporate offices and tire finishing. These additions, attributed to noted architect Eugene M. Hoffman, incorporate a similar design and materials as used in the original factory building, and have similar brick parapets and windows.

A few metal buildings on the property between 2349 and 2399 Main Street were constructed prior to 1921. Early uses included storage, a machine and pattern shop, and a bead room. During later remodelling efforts, these buildings were eventually connected to make one large open warehouse encompassing most of 2341-2399 Main Street. Uses of this part of the site as a brewery included changing some of the storage, at 2399, into a loading area, and the store and bead rooms became a place for bottled beer and a cooper shop. The pattern shop was converted into a storage area. No equipment or other evidence of uses remains and the 2341-2399 warehouse has been an empty shell for decades.

The original factory building underwent modifications when, in 1933, it was converted into a brewery. Window openings were enlarged vertically, and the wooden sash windows were replaced by metal frame industrial type windows featuring pivoting awning panels. At this time, some windows were bricked in. It was during this time that the parapets were added to the previously flat roofline. The one-story addition (Rathskellar) also had parapets added, its roofline was raised, and its original sash window was replaced by triple, Gothic windows.

The three-story office building has undergone minimal alterations since its 1915 construction. Original wood entrance doors at the north end were removed. Parapets were added during the 1930's conversion but later removed. Above the entrance area, there is a distinct variation in the window pattern, this being a triple window opening divided vertically within a single bay.

The architectural integrity of the remainder of the complex has deteriorated over time as the result of alterations and weathering. Most of the remaining structures were built between 1915 and the 1930s, and are constructed of steel post and steel truss frames sheathed in corrugated iron. They vary by roof shape, some flat, some gable, one with a clerestory. The architectural design is quite ordinary and unremarkable.

The site adjoining the south end of the office building has been occupied by a variety of structures including; a one-story brick wall and gable roof building that was used for tire finishing in 1915; a two-story stucco Mission Revival style building built in 1934 and used as a beer cellar; and a metal shed built in the 1960s or 1970s.

The building at 2201-2299 Main Street is Utilitarian in style and was built sometime around 1919 for use as a warehouse. It is a one-story structure, built in an elongated rectangular plan. The pitched roof is accentuated by large vent dormers along the ridge peaks. The exterior wall surface is corrugated iron sheathing. The building is devoid of decorative features, although there were, at one time, wooden loading doors with an interesting lath pattern. Windows feature pivoting awning type central panels composed of six panes each. There is nothing known about the architect or builder of this structure.

This section represents a basic physical description of the site. Following is an historical narrative which elaborates on what is known of the history of the site and the functions of the structures involved.

Historical Background

Savage Tire Factory Years

Arthur W. Savage, born in Jamaica in 1857 and educated in England and Baltimore, returned to the United States in 1886 after working in Jamaica as a coffee planter and in Australia as a cattle rancher. After being employed by the railroad in New York, he founded a gun company, the Savage Arms Company. His company manufactured and marketed numerous types of guns including the first hammerless repeating rifle.

Savage was an avid inventor. In addition to arms inventions, which included a torpedo used by the Brazilian government during their civil war, he also invented a method for drying wood, and machines for the decortification of fiber (San Diego Union, January 1, 1914). Although he came to San Diego in order to retire and pursue hobbies such as gardening and oil painting, he returned to inventing because of his annoyance at the state of automobile tires. Made of rubber, tires regularly punctured and needed to be replaced. The price of rubber had been steadily increasing. Tire manufacturers were turning out inferior products which were less elastic than older tires and also wore out quicker because they were made of old tires, presumably to help defray the expenses associated with increasing rubber costs. Edison and Westinghouse had abandoned research on a puncture-proof tire, but Savage continued working for two years to perfect it. The steel tire he invented was considered, at the time, to be a "most important [advancement] to the automobile industry" (San Diego Union, September 24, 1911). Savage used a variably-thick steel casing which surrounded the rubber inner tube to

create a puncture-proof tire with elasticity. He could build his tire and sell it to the consumer for the same cost as an all rubber tire. He, therefore, ended his retirement and founded the Savage Tire Company, in partnership with John D. and Claus Spreckels, to manufacture and market his steel tire.

In 1911, the Savage Tire Factory was constructed by general contractor G.W. Bell and Company of Los Angeles. Built as the largest structure of its kind in San Diego, at a cost of \$170,000, it housed some innovative features. These included large, automatic, fireproof sliding doors on each floor leading from the main building to the tower which contained the elevator shaft, stairwells, and restrooms (San Diego Union, October 11, 1911). In case of fire, these nonextant heat-activated doors would close, keeping the tower area free of smoke and fire, thus allowing the employees to escape.

The first floor was made of concrete and this is where die presses and heavy machinery were housed. At one end of the first floor there was a general and a smaller, private office. The second story was used as a toolroom and housed drilling machinery and other light equipment. The third floor was the assembly room and fabric department.

The one-story building was fireproof as a result of its construction material; iron, brick and steel. Furnaces and machinery for making the proper grade of steel were located here.

In 1912, the Savage Tire Company manufactured the first pneumatic tire in California. By 1920, it was considered the largest and best equipped rubber tire factory on the west coast. Toward the end of 1919, John D. Spreckels acquired a controlling interest in the company and a major reorganization took place as it became one of Spreckel's companies. Further expansion was planned as the company's products were internationally sought after not only because of their quality but because their exported tires were built to foreign specifications, using the metric standard.

Over the next decade, the company suffered severe decline. Car designs were progressing and new technology was necessary for tires as well. The Savage tire with its low air pressure became outdated and was not compatible with the newer car models. The company had to drastically reduce tire prices and even then, tires remained unsold. Spreckels lost money on the venture, died in 1926, and the company was dissolved. Local realtor George Forbes desperately tried to sell the entire complex.

Aztec Brewing Company Years

The Aztec Brewing Company originally started in Mexicali, Mexico, in 1921, because prohibition had become law in the United States. Partners in the venture included Edward P. Baker, Herbert Jaffe, James Crofton, and Vera Crofton.

James Crofton probably provided the capital for the venture as he had been a major partner in the successful Agua Caliente Hotel and Casino. One of his partners from that business was also purchasing a site on which to begin a brewing company. Baker and Jaffe headed the company. Jaffe had studied brewing in Pilsen,

Czechoslovakia and brought brewers from there to work in his plant. Vera Crofton became notable as the only woman brewery director in America who took an active role in the operation of the business.

In 1929, while still in Mexico, the government asked the Aztec Brewing Company to submit their popular ABC beer in an international exposition in Seville, Spain where it won a gold medal. Once prohibition ended, the owners looked into relocating their company and equipment in the United States.

In November 1932, the company acquired the Savage Tire Factory, San Diego's largest industrial site. The San Diego Union noted that the acquisition and rebirth of the "giant industrial ghost plant" was welcome and proved to be "a major factor in local unemployment relief" (San Diego Union, June 4, 1933). Company president Baker was proud that local businesses and labor were the beneficiaries of eighty-five percent of the money spent on rehabilitation. The company's plans were an application of President Roosevelt's appeal to industrialists and business to help bring the nation out of the depression through industrial recovery.

The plant had an ambitious beginning. Hops were imported from Saarz, Czechoslovakia and kept at 33 degrees until needed. Brewmaster Adolph Biewend previously worked for Schlitz and Anheuser-Busch breweries. The plant was the second largest of its kind in the nation and the initial bottle order of 14,400,000 bottles was second only to Anheuser-Busch. While other companies used a 12 ounce, brown bottle, the Aztec Brewing Company used a 16 ounce, clear glass bottle. There were high standards of design in the rehabilitation process. The brewery was reported to be handsome and even equipment such as the malt tubs, based with tile and sporting burnished copper on top, were elegant. Outside

the Main Street plant was a tropical garden.

Production got underway on June 8, 1933, with deliveries started at the end of July. Beer was shipped throughout California and also to Arizona, New Mexico, Nevada, Oregon, and Hawaii. Within three months, the Aztec Brewing Company was in third place in the west in volume of sales. By early 1934, expansion was planned to double the brewery's output.

In 1934, the Aztec Brewing Company contracted for a \$300,000 expansion and installed America's first concrete tanks, and additional cold storage. The "reinforced aging tanks" were built into the structure, meaning that the old wooden tanks were obsolete, and above the tanks, "overhead chilled air coils. . . replace[d] the present method of refrigeration" (San Diego Union, January 19, 1934). It was at this time that Baker persuaded Spanish artist Jose Moya del Pino to paint "the dramatic 'Human Sacrifice' Aztec theme mural" on the north wall of the small Rathskellar building (San Diego Union, June 13, 1934).

Jose Moya del Pino, born in Priego, Spain in 1891, was an artist from boyhood. He was a well known painter, muralist, and illustrator who studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Madrid. A newspaper article reported that Moya del Pino studied with Picasso in France (San Diego Union, June 10, 1934). Moya del Pino came to America, sponsored by the King, on a tour which showcased his copies of Velasquez paintings. The exhibition toured from New York to California, and Moya del Pino set down roots in San Francisco, partly because he liked the area, partly because of political problems in his own country.

In 1936, a new bottling plant was added to keep up with demand for the product. One-hundred bottles per minute were sterilized, cleaned, labelled, filled, and capped.

The Aztec Brewing Company remained a successful enterprise in San Diego for many years. In the late 1940's, James Crofton wanted to develop oil fields in Bakersfield and needed to raise money. Other partners were forced to go along with a sale of the company. In June 1948, the company was sold to Howard H. Colby, president Tivoli Brewing Company in Detroit. Thus, ended the era of the Aztec Brewing Company.

Later Years

The new Altes Brewing Company remodelled the site, at a cost of around \$500,000, and officially opened their plant on March 1,

1949, holding a two-day open house for the San Diego public. The new president was Colby, who lived in Detroit, and the vice-president and plant manager was C. A. Wasem. Baker stayed with the new company as its director. Altes brewmaster John Valconi developed a new beer and called it Altes Lager. (Valconi would later develop the Colt 45 Malt Liquor.)

Part of the rehabilitation of the plant included the enclosure of the fermentation vats. This meant that air would not get in and alter the flavor of the beer. The production capacity was increased substantially, a larger bottling area was developed, and a water purification system was installed.

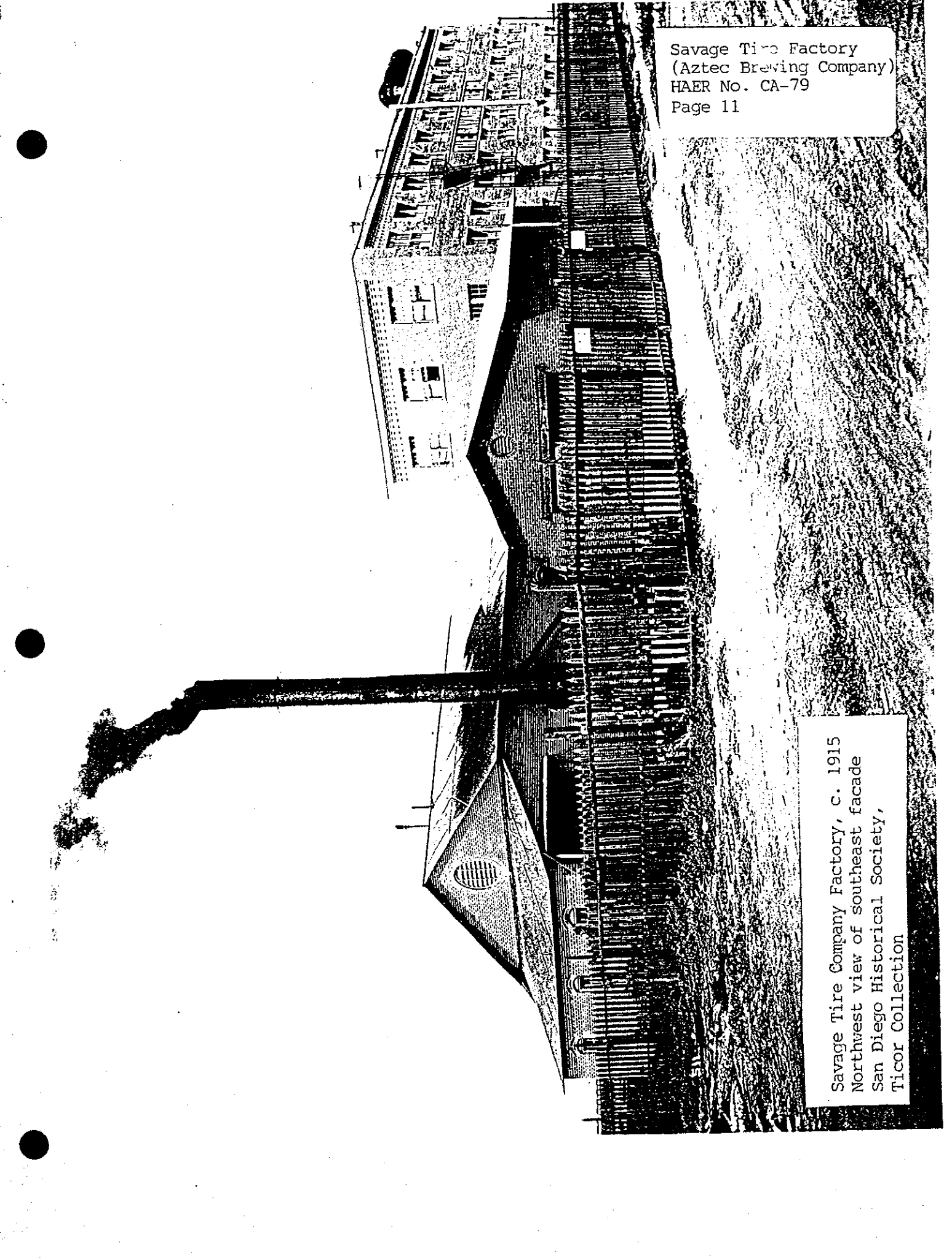
The new company originally offered the ABC brand and other Aztec beers but soon replaced them with their own brands which were not familiar to western residents. The San Diego plant was merely a twin plant to an eastern one and the slogan "The only eastern beer made in the west" did not make the beer popular. The demand for the product declined as all local, or even regional identification was lost. By 1951, a new beer, "7-11" was introduced to try and boost sagging sales. An advertising campaign was also launched and the company tried to get involved with the San Diego community by sponsoring a radio broadcast of the Padres games when the baseball team was in the Pacific Coast League. Improvement in sales did not follow and the plant was closed in 1953, affecting 150 employees who were grossing around one million dollars annually. Most of the brewery equipment was sent to Detroit to be auctioned off.

For the next few years, Rohr Aircraft used the site as a warehouse facility. In 1959, it became a United States Post Office Parcel Post Annex. In 1963 Dorman's Incorporated, a tire distributor, moved onto the site. Dorman's utilized the site in a variety of ways, as a center for manufacturing retread tires, as a commercial center where large trucks and tractors were housed, and as warehouse and office space. In the 1970's, the three-story brick building adjacent to Main Street was used as a main office.

Presently, this complex is slated for demolition. Despite efforts to secure the original buildings, they are currently occupied by thirty to forty transients. In addition to the impact caused by this transient population, the architectural integrity of the remainder of the complex has deteriorated over time as the result of alterations and weathering. The Rathskellar murals, designated historic by the San Diego Historic Site Board, have been removed and in the future will be displayed in

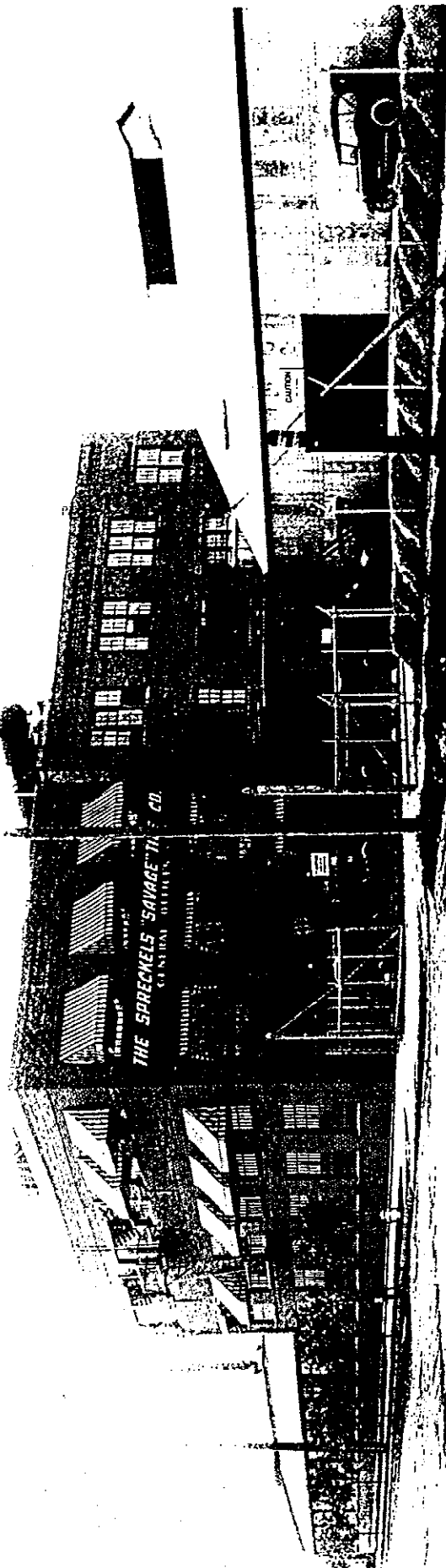
the community for public viewing.

The proposed two-phase demolition project will encompass approximately 50,000 square feet of one and two story brick structures and sheet-metal warehouses. The resulting construction will include two concrete tilt-up industrial warehouses, parking, and landscaping totaling 120,000 square feet. Because this site is located in an Enterprise Zone, this construction is encouraged and will greatly benefit the surrounding community.



Savage Tire Factory
(Aztec Brewing Company)
HAER No. CA-79
Page 11

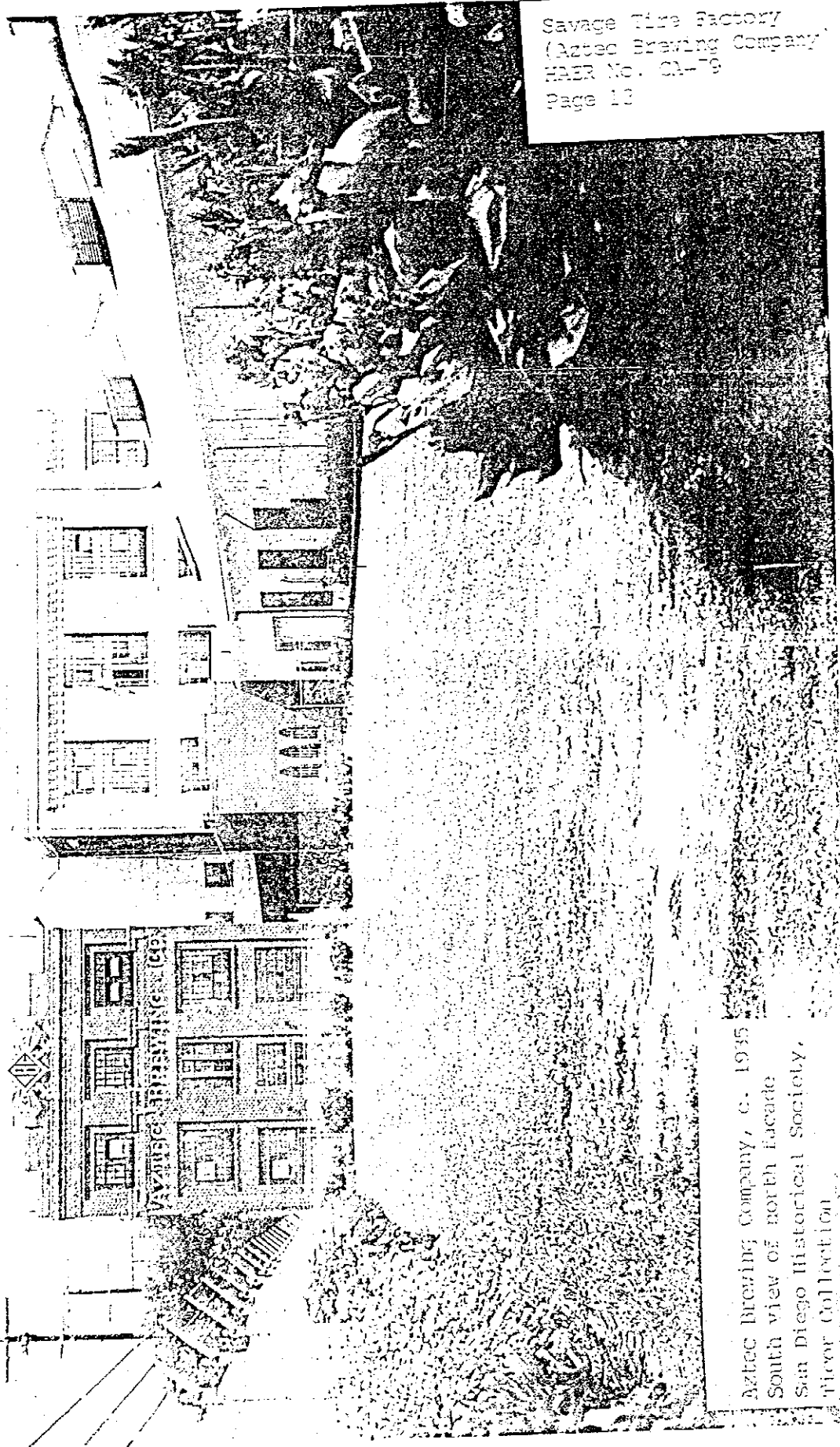
Savage Tire Company Factory, c. 1915
Northwest view of southeast facade
San Diego Historical Society,
Ticor Collection



Savage Tire Factory
(Aztec Brewing Company)
HAER No. CA-79
Page 12

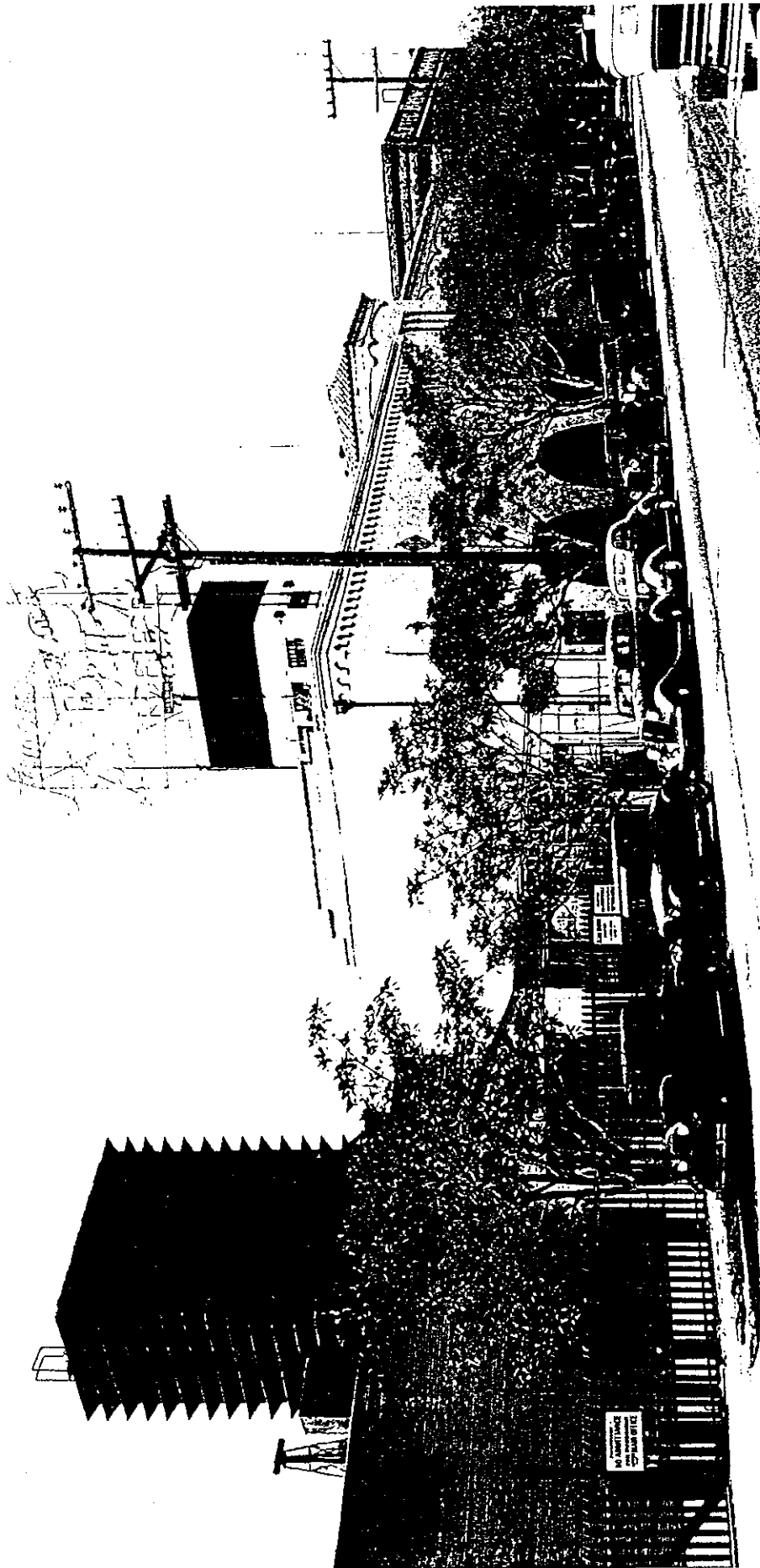
Spreckels Savage Tire Company, c.1925
Southwest view of northeast facade
San Diego Historical Society,
Ticor Collection

Savage Tire Factory
(Aztec Brewing Company)
HAER No. CA-79
Page 13



Aztec Brewing Company, c. 1935
South view of north facade
San Diego Historical Society,
Ticeor Collection

Savage Tire Factory
(Aztec Brewing Company)
HAER No. CA-79
Page 14



Aztec Brewing Company, 1943
Northwest view of southeast facade
San Diego Historical Society,
Ticor Collection

Savage Tire Factory
(Aztec Brewing Company)
HAER No. CA-79
Page 15



Aztec Brewing Company, c. 1937
Rathskellar, tasting room interior
San Diego Historical Society,
Ticor Collection

Savage Tire Factory
(Aztec Brewing Company)
HAER No. CA-79
Page 16



O C E A N

Figure 1: A schematic diagram of a vertical wellbore. The wellbore is represented by a vertical line with a dashed centerline. At the top, a horizontal line indicates the ground surface. Below the surface, the wellbore is divided into two sections. The upper section is labeled "10°" and "100 m". The lower section is labeled "10°" and "100 m". The wellbore is shown as a vertical line with a dashed centerline. The diagram is labeled "Figure 1" and "Figure 1: A schematic diagram of a vertical wellbore."

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ROAD CLASSIFICATION

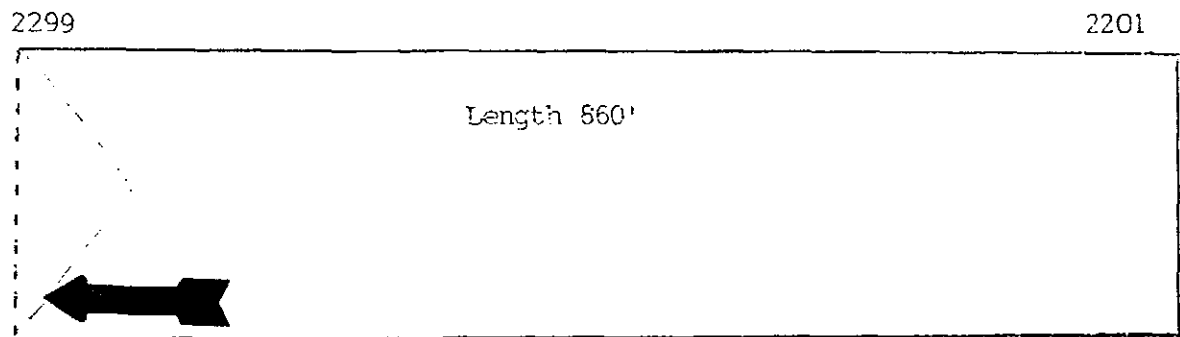
Heavy duty _____ Light duty _____

Medium duty _____ Unimog rated _____

☐ Imported Road ☒ U.S. Road ☐ Snow Road

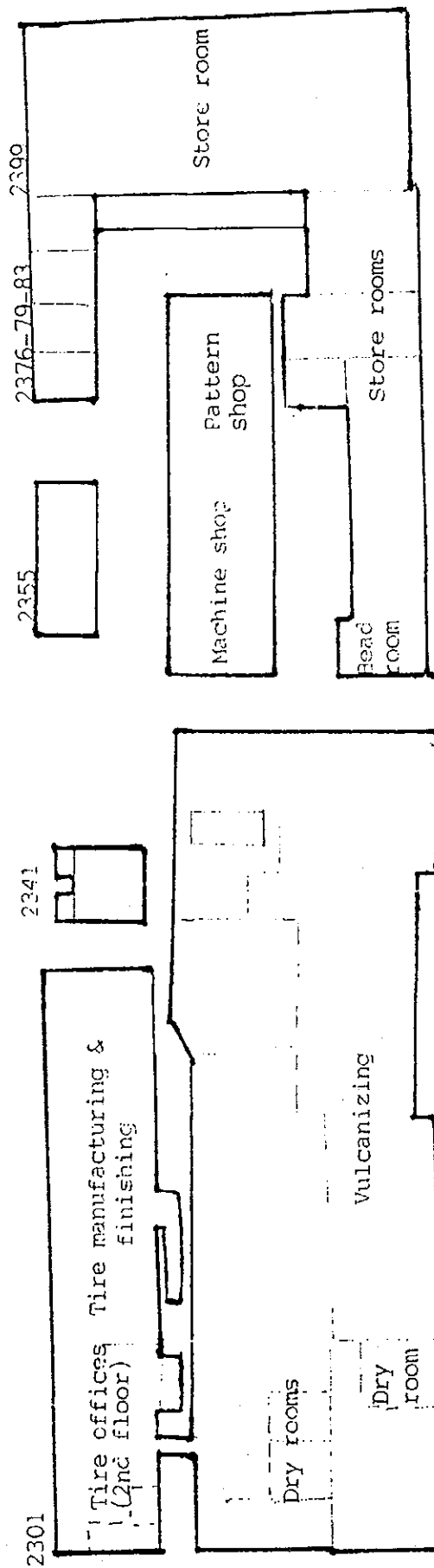
POINT LOMA, CALIF
JUN 19 1964
JUN 19 1964
JUN 19 1964

2200-2299 Main
Savage Tire Factory & Aztec Brewing Co.
Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, 1921-1951

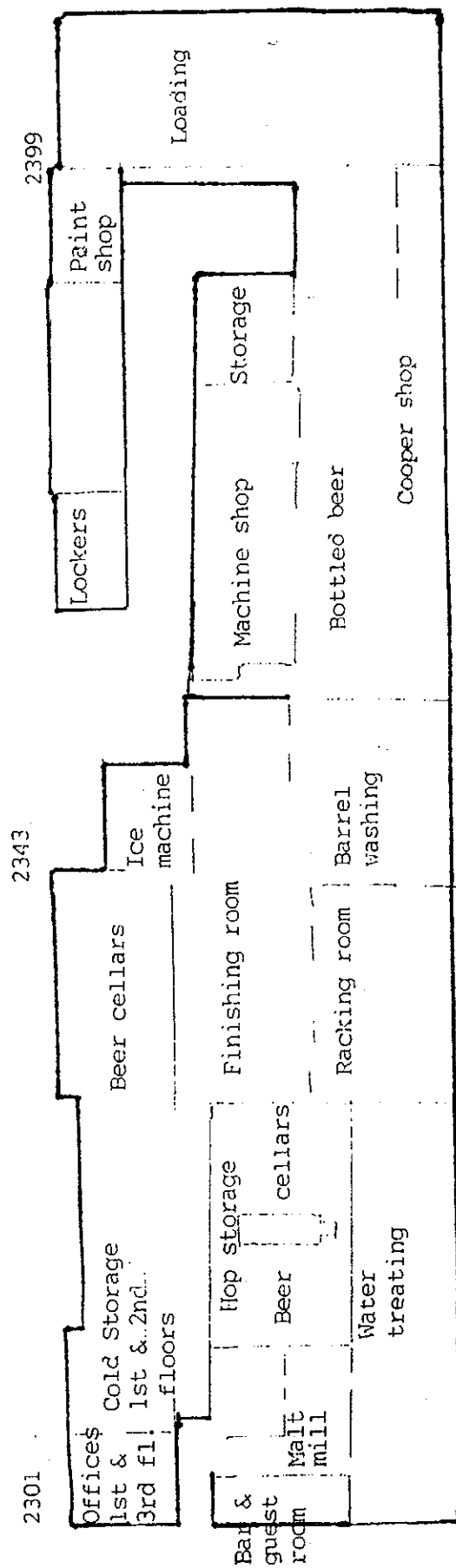


attaches to original factory building

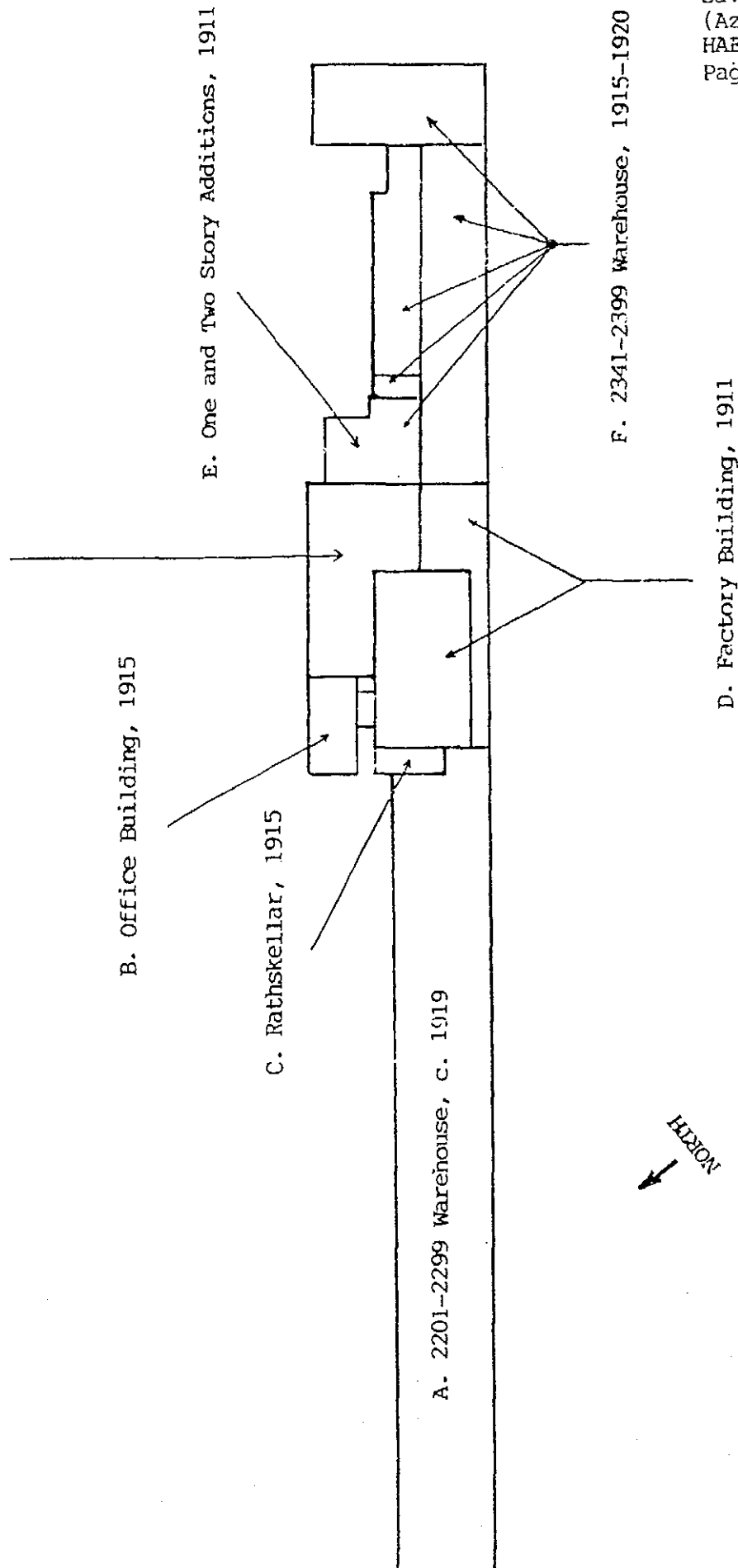
2301-2399 Main St.
 Site Plan of Savage Tire Factory
 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1921.

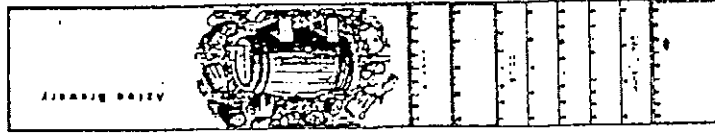
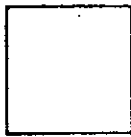
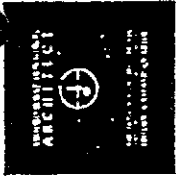


2301-2399 Main St.
 Site Plan of Altes Brewery
 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Apr. 1951.

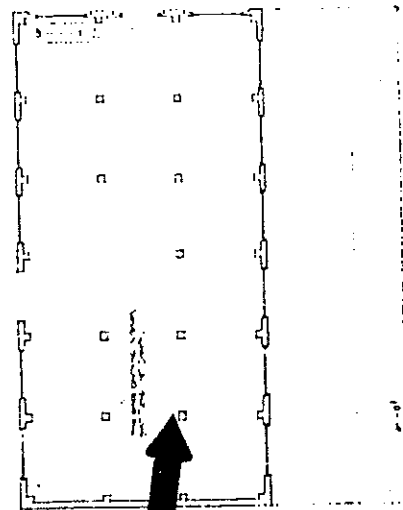
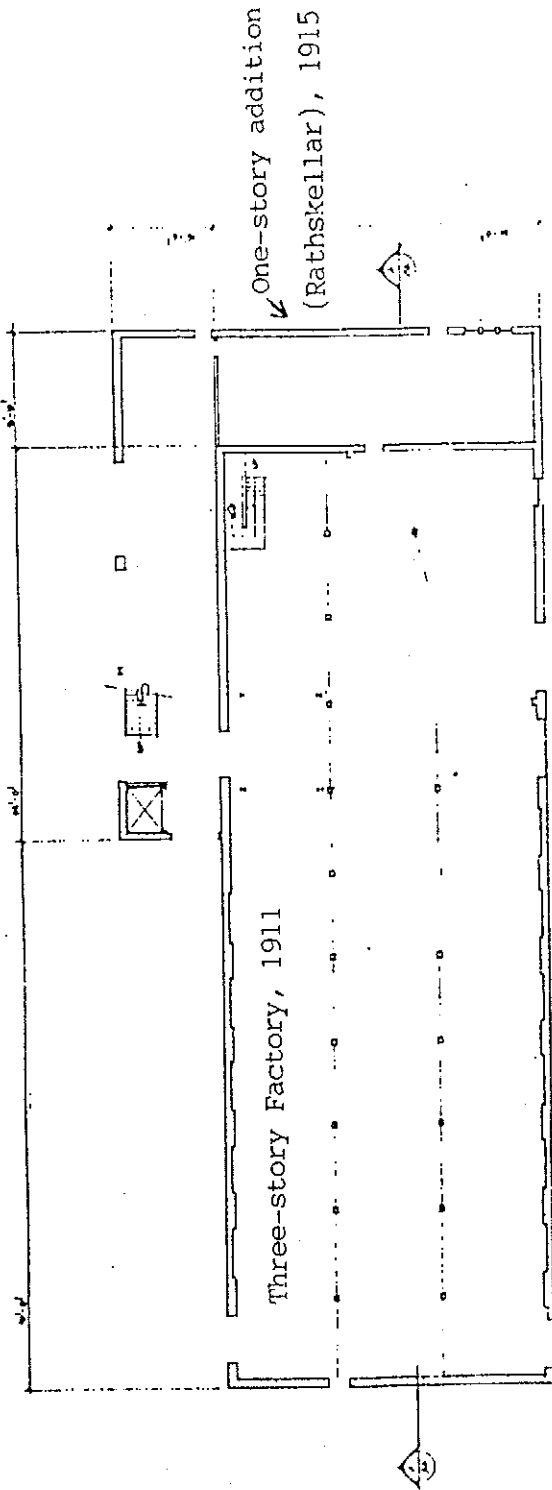


G. Tire Finishing/Beer Cellar/Shed
1915 1934 c. 1965





First Floor Plan	A3
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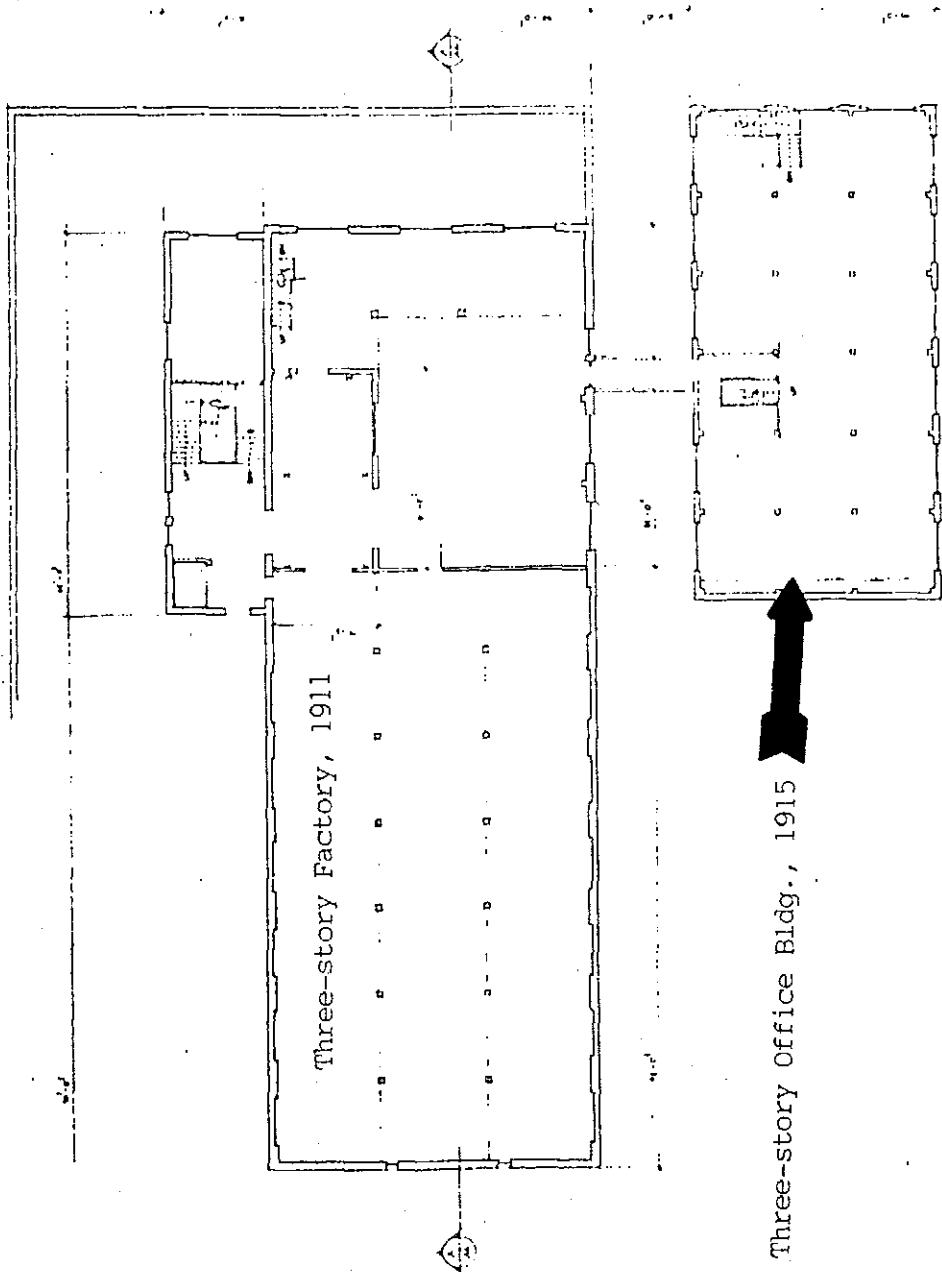
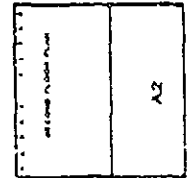
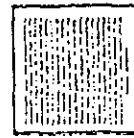
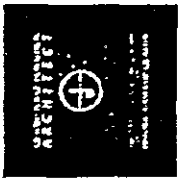


Three-story Office Bldg., 1915

FIRST FLOOR PLAN

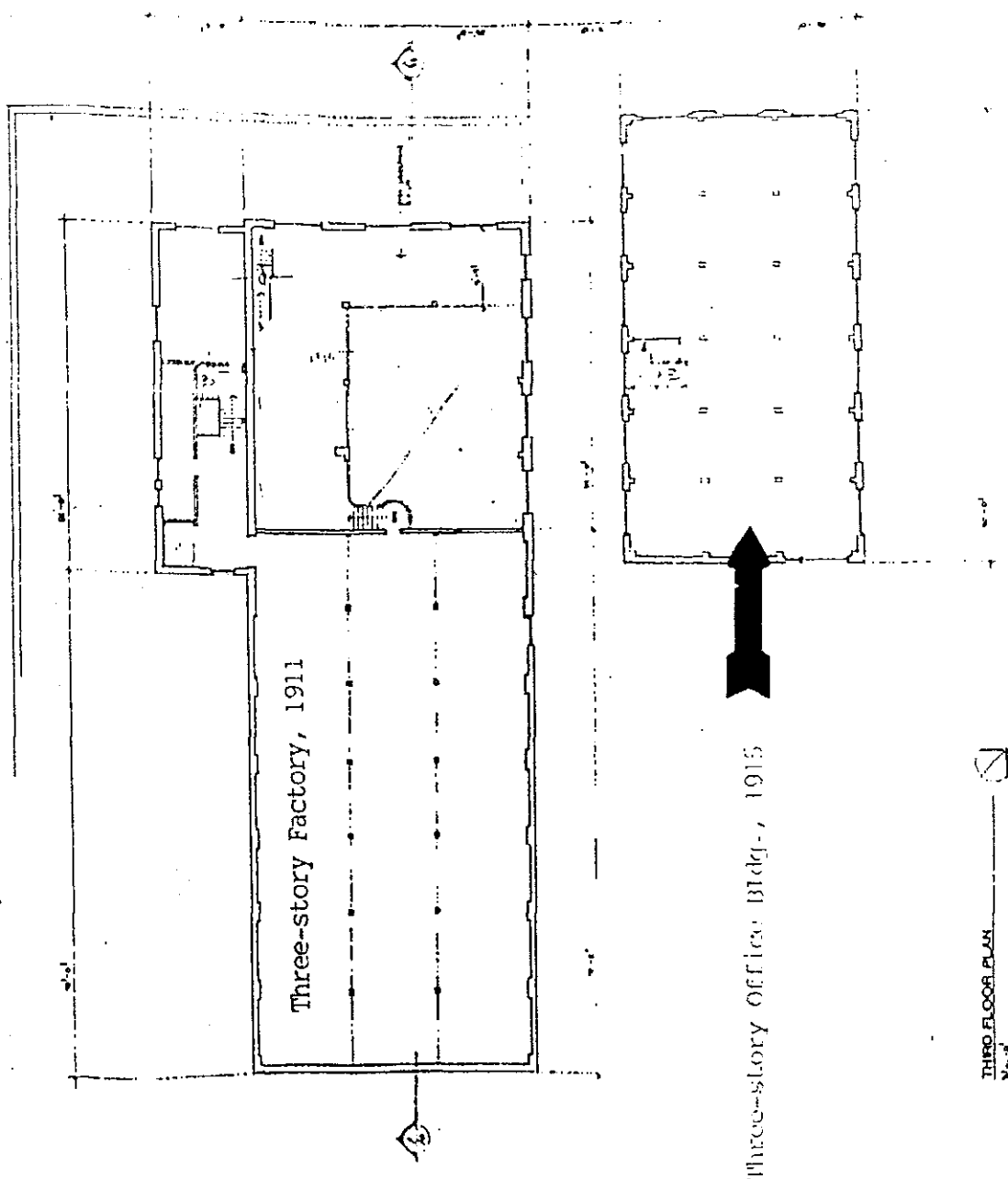
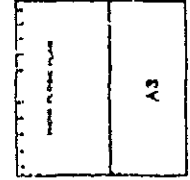
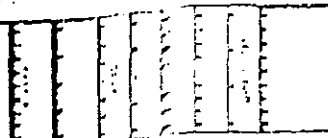
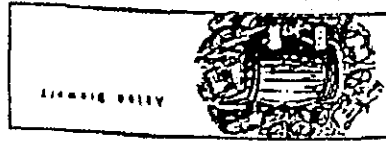
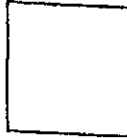
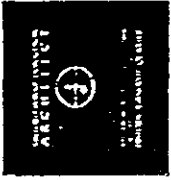
Condition: Fair

MAIN STREET



SECOND FLOOR PLAN

Condition: Fair



THIRD FLOOR PLAN
 1/2" = 1'-0"

Condition: Fair

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